



HIGH DEFINITION TAPE TRANSFERS

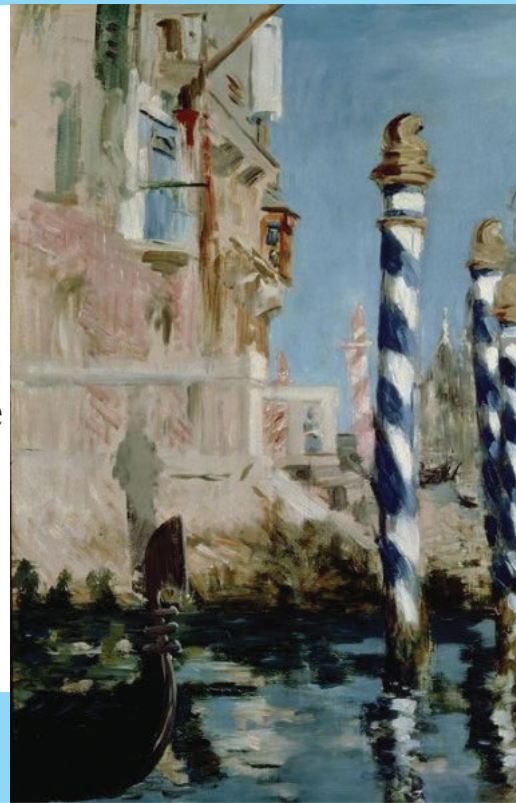


*Fritz Reiner / Chicago Symphony Orchestra*

# Rossini Overtures

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Fritz Reiner conducts the  
Chicago Symphony Orchestra



**DXD**  
Digital eXtreme Definition

Mastered using  
24bit/352.8 kHz resolution

Hungarian maestro Fritz Reiner (1888–1963) honed the Chicago Symphony (1954–1962) into a virtuoso ensemble, well rivaling the NBC Symphony under Toscanini for discipline and rhythmic energy. The assorted overtures by Rossini, aka “Monsieur Crescendo,” provide ample opportunity for bravura display and sonic grandiosity of the highest order. The girth of the muscular approach by Reiner, however, to these essentially witty scores may do some auditors a disservice, since even Toscanini never lost sight of their buffo character. Reiner opts for monumentality rather than light humor and clever brio. Where Reiner evinced panache in the music of Johann Strauss, the Rossini style somehow eludes him in favor of a Teutonic weight and misplaced seriousness. The original RCA sonics, however, sent up the CSO clarity and pungent discipline to the heavens, and that degree of orchestral wizardry demands respect.

Obviously, many auditors of the period found Reiner to their taste, despite any quibbles over the ‘gravitas’ of his readings, some even finding that ‘debatable’ quality of humor:

The spectacular Fritz Reiner years as Conductor of The Chicago Symphony Orchestra represent the cream of the “Living Stereo” crop of RCA Red Seal recordings. Using the impressive acoustics of Orchestra Hall to great advantage, the recording team of Lewis Layton and Richard Mohr managed to capture so many great musical moments to include this wonderful collection of Rossini Overtures. These Rossini performances are full of the legendary Reiner touches to include razor sharp ensemble, breath taking tempos and superb musicianship by the entire

orchestra.

This is the most stunning album of Rossini overtures ever recorded. All the overtures here are close to being the finest versions, but the tour de force is the overture to William Tell. You may think that you’re entirely familiar with that old warhorse, and that there’s nothing more for you to find in it. Reiner will disclose wonders that you never imagined: precision of rapid brass chords, crescendos of the strings in the galop, the triangle’s tingle, the tripping out of the solo flute, the surprise of a tutti fortissimo held back just the tenth part of second. Listening intently is physically exhausting; the galop goes at least as fast as Toscanini’s.

Reiner simply leads the Chicago Symphony in exceptional performances. In each overture, the CSO plays with such energy, vigor, precision, and outstanding musicianship, that they give the perfect blend of wit, humor, and playfulness to each performance. A truly outstanding album and a must have.

Rossini’s overtures overall simply do not get any better than this, and for several of them, this represents the pinnacle of recorded art. These performances are full of vigor, full of humor, full of passion and full of Maestro Reiner’s vision of excellence. The Barber of Seville bubbles with life and hijinks. The Thieving Magpie evokes and releases the tension of the hero and the avian “villain” with gusto. And, as others have suggested here, the Overture to William Tell is superb start to finish, featuring a glorious Swiss sunrise, with the shepherd’s ranz de vaches that sweetly provides temporary comfort and shelter between the thunder of the tempest and what is surely the most glorious galop on record, matched only by Toscanini’s fire.

# Rossini Overtures

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1. The Barber of Seville
2. La Gazza Ladra
3. La Cenerentola
4. William Tell
5. La Scala di Seta
6. II Signor Brushino

Recorded by RCA Date of Recording: 1958

Venue: Chicago Symphony Hall

Producer: Richard Mohr Engineer: Lewis Layton



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